

Imperial Valley Weekly

Imperial Hometown Review

THURSDAY, APRIL 24, 2003

Local Korean War Vets To Be Presented With Service Medals

Congressman Bob Filner and the U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Anthony Principi will be presenting Korean War Service Medals to more than 40 Local Veterans in a ceremony set for this Friday, April 25th. Throughout the week leading up to this Friday's ceremony, two of the Valley veterans who served in Korea will be available for interviews.

"This week, while we think of the troops now serving Iraq, we are also remembering those who were there for our country more than 50 years ago," said Congressman Filner. "This is a very special week for some of the Valley's finest citizens - men who served their country with honor and distinction."

The two veterans available for interview are Stanley Martinez

and Frank Britton, Jr., both of El Centro. Interviews can be arranged by contacting Chief Benny Benavides at 760-352-3929.

Stanley Martinez

When Stanley Martinez was 21, he served for 11 months in Korea. He says that everyone should be aware of what is often referred to as "The Forgotten War", and calls Korea "a heck of a place to come and die."

He sees his service as an answer to a call to stop the aggression of communism and help South Koreans, and reminds us that this country is made up of veterans. Before he retired, Martinez worked at the Gypsum plant in Imperial Valley.

Frank Britton, Jr.

Frank Britton, Jr. served in Korea

from October 1951 to October 1952. His experience included bunker busting with the 204th Field Artillery Battalion.

He was also stationed at Panmunjon, the location of the lengthy Truce Conference. During his service, he had several chance encounters with fellow servicemen from the Imperial Valley.

Of his time in Korea, he says, "The main thing I got from it was a sense of self-respect." Britton now works in the legal system.

Both veterans have waited more than 50 years to receive their medals. To arrange an interview with the veterans, interested members of the media should contact Chief Benny Benavides at 760-352-3929. The U.S. Navy in El Centro can be contacted at 760-339-2519.